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ABSTRACT

This study, a synthesis of 51 published prescriptive essays and program reports from 1978 to 1997, follows the development of honors programs in comprehensive community colleges. Despite arguments that programs of this sort betray the institution's democratic imperative by implying academic elitism, diverting needed funds from developmental/remedial programs, and isolating the best students from the rest of the student body, the community college must serve the academic needs of the intellectually talented as well as those less so. Community colleges are now emphasizing quality education and providing preparation for transfer to four-year institutions, a trend that supports offering college honors programs. A large number of schools have adopted these programs since the early 1980s despite resistance, and the number is increasing. Schools are blending together different ranges of honors credit options, with most programs focusing on general education and liberal arts. Evaluations of honors programs have yielded positive student and teacher attitudes, and uniformly high student grades, but have not yet determined whether there is a positive correlation with future educational success and outcomes. Appendix includes community colleges and districts specified in works cited. (Contains 51 references.) (EMH)

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Honors Programs in Community Colleges: A Review of Recent Issues and Literature

Joseph P. Byrne

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HONORS PROGRAMS IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES:

A Review of Recent Issues and Literature

Abstract

This study is based upon a study of 51 published prescriptive essays and program reports from 1978 to 1997. The development of honors programs in comprehensive community colleges appears to betray the institutions' democratic imperative by implying academic elitism, diverting needed funds from developmental/remedial programs and isolating the best students from the rest of the student body, and is therefore often resisted covertly or overtly by faculty and/or administrators. Ironically, these opponents ignore the essential dictate to serve the academic needs of **all** members of the community, the intellectually talented and motivated as well as the less so. Under influence from a number of quarters, community colleges have moved from an emphasis on access and egalitarianism in the 1960s and 1970s to one on quality in the 1980s and 1990s. Not least among these influences is the growing importance of preparation for transfer to four-year schools, a trend that argues heavily for provision of collegiate-type experiences -- including honors-type program elements -- at the two-year institution. Although no comprehensive surveys of current programs have been carried out, it is clear that a large number of schools have adopted honors programs since the early 1980s, despite resistance, philosophically or otherwise founded.

The mid-1980s produced a healthy literature that apparently convinced many that honors programs would serve an increasing number of high-ability students; would generally strengthen other programs, especially in general education; would attract and help retain excellent students and faculty; and would enhance the institution's overall reputation with high schools, universities and the general public. In their early program reports, researchers or participants often express the impetus behind adopting honors, generally relating it to the institution's desire to enhance or enrich the educational experience of the more capable student. Formally adopted goals often relfect the prescriptive literature as well as the school's specific reasons. This may suggest either that the literature had its intended effect, or that schools adopted the program for a single reason, and rationalized their decision by fleshing out a fuller list of goals for public consumption and evaluative purposes.

Many schools have adopted the traditional collegiate model for honors programs. Community colleges often create a broad social and intellectual context for honors students beyond that of the classroom. This might incorporate extracurricular lectures, cultural events, banquets, special advising, scholarships, academic recognition, etc., in addition to courses designated "honors". Yet, because community colleges are commuter schools, without the residential life that really allows for an enriched extracurriculum, the curricular elements are probably vital.

Honors credit can be earned in a number of types of courses. the most common being standard courses with an honors project attached ("in-course honors"): honors sections of standard courses: special courses. which are often interdisciplinary in nature: special seminars or labs: and independent study opportunities. Schools blend these options together to create curricula that range from a few less developed opportunities to full-blown sequences that replace general education electives: indeed. most honors programs center on general education and liberal arts portions of school curricula.

Assessment and evaluation are necessary components of curricula and other academic programs. and honors generally allows for some collection and valorization of pertinent data. This generally includes information on student demographics. academic intentions. retention. grades. and satisfaction. and faculty and administrator satisfaction. Schools' participant profiles vary by age and previous college experience. though overall. most are white women who intend to transfer. yet who take only one or two classes and show a slightly higher retention rate than the general population. Where studied. H-course grades tend to be uniformly high. and some reports claim advances in constructive attitudes (e.g. teamwork. individual initiative). Both faculty and students tend to rate highly their satisfaction with classroom experiences. Where evaluations clearly relate program goals to outcomes. clear measures of effects on successful transfer. future income levels. public reputation of the school. and effect of the program on the general educational environment of the school are hard to come by. and have thus far eluded evaluators.

The general conclusion that emerges is that honors curricula have been embraced by many comprehensive community colleges and will continue to develop in order to provide educational options for superior students in the community-based. low cost institutions that seek to enhance their general education. and especially transfer programs. Nontheless. wel!-structured assessment and evaluation are vital to address program weaknesses and confirm strengths. And finally. all along the way. close articulation with both high school and four-year school programs is vital to maintaining the effectiveness and relevance of honors. both in drawing superior students and preparing them for continuing formal education. The question now is whither honors. not whether.

HONORS PROGRAMS IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES:
A Review of Recent Issues and Literature

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INTRODUCTION

This study of honors programs and their curricula in comprehensive community colleges is grounded in an examination of prescriptive literature based on such programs and on reports of a number of them, either by researchers or participants. A list of the relevant 38 schools in 19 states appears as an appendix. In exploring the existence of honors on the community college campus, I have framed several elementary questions around which to hang the prescriptive and program material: Do honors programs belong in community colleges? Why did those schools that have them choose to do so? What are the stated goals of the programs? Why and how are honors programs "programs", and not merely curricula? How are honors curricula structured? Do the curricula and programs succeed?

Although some of the reports include at least implicit responses to all of these questions, most do not: I have therefore refrained from creating a systematic, quantified framework for comparison, relying instead on a looser methodology by which to trace the main currents. Since published reports cover the period from 1974 to the present, and admitting that new programs today have the advantage of building atop two decades of

other schools' experience. comparing programs *per se* seems a fool's errand. Since no source with which I am familiar. not even the standard *National Profile of Community Colleges: Trends and Statistics. 1997-1998.* lists schools with such programs. let alone outlines them. any valid comparison or statistical evaluation of contemporary programs is. at present. not possible. The handiest source is in fact Roueche. Parnell and Kuttler's *1001 Exemplary Practices in America's Two-Year Colleges*. which gives thumbnail sketches of 13 honors programs in nine states.

My purpose. then. is to provide a rather global answer to the question "What is honors doing on American community college campuses?" Though I would like to add "today" to the end of the question. I am afraid that an ambitious study beyond the scope of this literature review is required for this inclusion. As always. there is plenty of room for further research.

Do Honors Programs Belong in Community Colleges?

Both reports and prescriptive papers suggest strongly that there can be considerable opposition to the establishment of an honors program. and resentment after its institution. Faculty members appear to be the major source of disaffection. and. as the remarks in five papers suggest. their criticisms are fairly uniform (Sampson: Bay: Piland and Gould: Bulakowski and Townsend: Eaton. 1994). The academic "elitism" of honors. perceived by many as inappropriate in a community college. tops the lists of four of the papers. Close behind rank expense and the drain of

good students away from standard classes and non-honors instructors. Sampson adds that some feel that certain types of honors courses are not individualistic enough. and that the time and effort required of both faculty and students. as well as the lack of coordination among departments or divisions. would undermine the effectiveness of such a program. According to Piland and Gould. Illinois faculty expressed fears that there were too few good students to warrant such a program. that perhaps students did not want such courses. and that such a program would be too complex. As late as 1994. Judith Eaton. writing about "collegiate education" in community colleges. cited concerns of public misunderstanding of such academic "elitism". and the problems inherent in the patterns of erratic attendance and the demand-driven nature of community college programs in general. which would exacerbate problems in "collegiate courses".

Many of these reservations. however. may be addressed through rather simple means: aggressive administrative organization and coordination. polling of prospective honors students. development of a program that does not isolate the excellent student. expressed recognition that all good students would not wish to be in honors. Those objections that are based upon a purely egalitarian notion of the comprehensive community college may in the end only be addressed through revisions in or a clearer articulation of the mission statement of the institution.

Arguments in favor of including honors on the community

college campus stem likewise from both the practical and the philosophical, and are naturally given the stronger position in papers on existing programs or the prescriptive literature. In his early study of St. Petersburg Community College's honors program, Sampson noted that 20% of community college students were those of high ability (top quartile), and that in his specific sample, 32 of 48 high school high achievers achieved less than a 3.0 in general community college courses. Gamely, though illogically, he claimed that "lack of a substantial honors program was clearly a detriment to these students" and concluded that thus there was a "need for an honors program" (2). Piland *et al.* reported an updated study of high quality students (1982) in which 25% admitted being in the top 20% of their high school graduating class. They further reported that student dissatisfaction accounting for poor performance stemmed in large part from frustration with peers and with teachers who taught to the lowest and slowest. Patricia McKeague noted a 1983 study that showed that high ability students dropped out of community colleges at the same rate as the general population, for which she blamed the schools' inability or unwillingness to motivate and challenge: "bright students are often unchallenged as instructors tend to concentrate on students who are having difficulty understanding course content."

If it is true that meeting the goals of a diverse student population is a main objective of a comprehensive community college, then should not schools recognize that diversity

includes the superior students? (Heck, 1986). If these are not being well served by existing programs, then some enhancement of the student experience, aimed at these superior community college student, might well be in order.

Why Do Community Colleges Choose to have Honors?

The refrain that community colleges were serving all comers *except* the well-prepared, highly skilled and motivated student emerged and swelled in Reagan's America. In the mid-1980s cries were heard abroad in the land: "in our headlong rush to attain equity for all citizens, the educational needs of our ablest and most highly motivated students were not being met by community colleges" (Behrendt). Cohen lambasted the "perversion of the comprehensive mission of the community college into a narrow obsession with career training and serving the least able [students]." Lehner lamented that the "largely ignored segment of the [community] college population has been the gifted student." Pflaum et al., in their study of the commuter campus of the University of Illinois in Chicago drew on the behavioral study of R. Moos, who developed the theory of "progressive conformity", which posits that students will respond in kind to rigorous or slack peers and teachers: hence the obvious need for at least a program in the school that embodies high standards of academic achievement. By 1989 Skau could conclude that "within the past decade, more attention has been focussed on the needs of motivated high ability students and this has lead [sic] to a

greater interest in honors programs."

Indeed, the 1980s saw a shift in the emphasis in community college culture from egalitarian access, which had largely been achieved, to academic quality (Behrendt). Higher ability students were entering community colleges because of convenience and rising costs at four-year institutions, and more mature learners were returning to school for various reasons. The 1984 ERIC Digest report on community college honors stated that such programs "serve the dual purpose of meeting the needs of a significant segment of the two-year college student body and of meeting increased public demand for educational quality." In 1982, Friedlander had set the tone for honors apologists with his immanently reasonable list of rationale: to help meet the needs of all the people; to strengthen program quality, especially in general education; to attract and retain good students and faculty; to enhance the public reputation of the school.

These prescriptions found their way into many program proposals and reports: "Honors programs, then, can help the comprehensive community college meet its commitment to make excellence available to all of its students" (McKeague). Honors was to: "be a coordinated response to the real needs of a substantial number of students" (Bay, 18); "serve the needs of all students, the bright as well as the average and the remedial" (Piland and Gould); "gain [for Moraine Valley Community College] a prestigious reputation within the community it serves as well as within the academic for the academic excellence it nurtures"

(Lehner); serve as a "foundation" of "the college's commitment to serve superior students" (Thomas). Rankin noted that a strong honors program might encourage "high school counsellors to speak more positively about the college to their gifted advisees." thus over time improving the overall quality of the school's student body and feeding its honors program further.

Certainly one of the most powerful arguments for an honors program is its role in preparing superior students for transfer to high quality baccalaureate programs, thus better serving the students and the community college's reputation. Of course, California has led the way through its *Master Plan for Higher Education*, by making transfer concerns a "central part of the mission of the system" and a "central area of faculty responsibility." The Academic Senate in Sacramento ties programs like honors in the two-year schools to the bigger picture of success in transfer through faculty mentoring, high retention, strong academic preparation, and "the perception of capability to transfer." According to Ruiz, *et al*, honors likewise plays an important part in the Hostos Community College Integrated Transfer Program to CUNY senior colleges, as it encourages and prepares "above average students to continue their education." The Hostos program was funded by the Ford Foundation as part of an integrated effort to establish successful models for encouraging transfer (the Urban Community College Transfer Opportunities Program). From the perspective of the Foundation, honors was a key to successful transfer in so far as it

"emphasize[d] the reading- and writing-intensive environment that students would experience on four-year campuses" (Donovan).

In every program report that includes such information one finds majorities of students already in honors programs intending to transfer for baccalaureate study: 66.2% (Lucas); 50% (Day); 60% (San Diego C.C.D.); 55.8 (Abood); 69% (Piland and Abzell). Eaton (1994) rightly points out that collegiate-level courses, including honors, promote greater access to baccalaureate degrees, especially for the lower-income student. As programs develop further, transfer rates, both to four-year schools in general, and to high quality schools in particular, will doubtless play large roles in program evaluations.

What Are the Stated Goals for Community College Honors Programs?

Goals for honors programs follow rather predictable patterns that stem from the general rationale for honors and the functions that honors is supposed to perform. Goals are rarely stated verbatim in reports, and must, at times, be drawn from statements about goals or objectives for program elements. For example, Sampson's early report on St. Petersburg's honors courses states simply that they "should stimulate students to a higher plane of achievement rather than [do] more of what regular sections do." Motlow State Community College in Tullahoma, Tennessee recently created an "integrated honors program which addresses, in an interdisciplinary fashion, the richness of our cultural heritage and the skills necessary to adapt to and profit from change;" it

is meant to "enrich our regular curriculum with some of the interdisciplinary materials and approaches that have proven successful" (Motlow State C.C.). The 1983 report on Miami-Dade Community College's Emphasis on Excellence Program, which incorporated honors courses, stated as program goals: to challenge, stimulate, involve superior students with "high academic standards and ambitious career aspirations" (Thomas). North Arkansas Community College sets its goals for honors as: assisting students in being better citizens; inculcating habits, skills and attitudes to enrich life; exposing students to ideas and knowledge that shaped the world; and allowing the students to relate their fields to the "entirety of the human experience" (Terrill).

The 1994 evaluation of the Maricopa (Arizona) District's thirteen year-old honors program cites as its primary goal, "to offer academically motivated students an opportunity to expand further their educational and career horizons." It goes on to list four specific goals: to create a climate of excellence in the school and community; to recognize and reward the talent and motivation of outstanding students and faculty; to promote a sense of scholarship and community in and among colleges; to raise awareness of the quality and variety of educational services at M.C.C.D. (Crooks and Haag). Five years earlier, George Skau reported Maricopa's goals in similar and even more canonical terms: to attract and retain superior students, to recognize and meet their needs, and to reward these students; to

improve the image of the college; to challenge and satisfy the faculty; to serve as a focal point for experimentation on innovative courses, services and programs. One senses some refinement of the goals over time, for example from 'improving the image of the college', to 'raising awareness of its quality', but they seem to have remained fairly constant.

In 1986 James Heck, then a doctoral candidate in Higher Education in Gainesville, Florida, summarized the goals he found expressed in the literature to date: to recognize and meet the unique needs of talented and motivated students; to encourage a high level of excellence; to attract and retain talented and motivated students; to benefit the whole campus; to enhance the school's public image; to challenge and reward the faculty; to give academic balance to the curriculum; to serve as a center for innovation; to provide incentives and recognition for excellent students; to attract and retain faculty. Interestingly, Heck omitted both career and transfer enhancement, key themes that would later be added by a number of programs. I would venture to hypothesize nonetheless that such a survey of program goals today would produce a very similar list.

While such goals clearly flow from both generic and institution-specific rationale, they provide little guidance for shaping honors programs or curricula. Any combination of goals might be matched with any set of program or curriculum elements, and indeed, neither could be predicted from a study of the other. The literature seems to suggest that there was a good deal of

modelling at work, with schools matching a rather limited number of goals with a rather limited number of program and curriculum options, as we will see.

How and Why Are Programs "Programs" and Not Merely Curricula?

Community colleges did not create the concept of honors education *ex nihilo*. Rather, they borrowed it from the four-year college and university. Begun under Frank Aydelotte at Swarthmore College in the wake of the First World War, honors was developed as a means of enriching the general education curriculum without directly affecting the courses in it. As mass education evolved after the Second World War, honors spread as a way of strengthening academics as well as creating an institutional focal point for those most seriously engaged in it. As complements to honors coursework in developing the "whole" honors student, residential schools created programs of extracurricular activities ranging from club meetings and annual banquets to full-scale honors residential colleges .

At the time that community colleges adopted the concept, honors could mean anything from a few course opportunities to fully developed divisions (Indiana University) or residential colleges (Arizona State University). Although community colleges lack the residential life that supports a wide range of social networking and extracurricular programming, many schools have incorporated at least some elements of the collegiate model. Given students who work off campus and commute to it, who are

often above the age of traditional students, and who indeed cover a wide range of ages, one would expect many elements that require scheduling or socializing apart from class time to fail, and they often do. Other elements, however -- including special advising, scholarships, recognition at graduation and on transcripts -- do draw the attention of students, as shown in surveys such as that reported in Piland and Abzell. In this 1984 study of students at eight community colleges in Florida and Illinois the authors found that students most often rated the academic challenge as the major reason for participating (76%), with scholarships (61%) and enhanced potentials for transfer (57%) not far behind. "Scholarship" opportunities may come in the form of work-study (Palo Alto, Texas), community adopt-a-scholar programs (Carl Albert State College, Oklahoma), special honors scholarship funds or guarantees of scholarships at local colleges or universities upon successful completion of the honors program (Tarant C.J.C., Texas) (Roueche).

The thumbnail sketches of 13 community college honors programs in Roueche exhibit a range of extracurricular social and intellectual elements ranging from Eastern Utah's 94-room Honors Residence through newsletters and a *Journal*, field trips, active participation the the National Collegiate Honors Council or Phi Theta Kappa (the two-year school honors society), debates, cultural experiences (concerts, theatre), summer academic orientations for high school students, and the provision of special lounges, libraries, study rooms or computer facilities

reserved for honors students. The provision of co- or extracurricular programming is limited only by the constraints of insttutional committment and creativity. The core of any honors program, however, is the curriculum itself.

How Are Honors Curricula Structured?

Honors courses take a number of forms. The simplest is the "in-course" option, by which students may convert any standard course into an H-course by completing additional requirements, usually in the form of labs, research projects, or creative endeavors. This keeps the high-ability students in these courses while affording them the opportunity to enhance their experience and transcript. Corning Community College in New York relies exclusively on this approach (Roueche). Also quite common and simple to administer is the independent study or directed reading/research course that is mentored by a single faculty member. This usually builds upon previous coursework, and allows both student and teacher to move beyond the usual survey classroom experience in a highly individualized fashion.

More commonly, honors programs rely heavily on special sections of core curriculum courses. Friedlander (1982) suggested that such courses provide "more opportunities for creative thought and discussion as well as research and questioning" (2). Palo Alto Community College describes its courses as having been "revised and augmented so as to provide additional academic rigor and to require scholarship beyond usual

expectations" (Roueche, 674). In her 1984 survey of 19 programs, McKeague found a clear pattern of "enrichment" in these kinds of courses: more reading (88%); more discussion (88%); independent study or research (81%); problem solving (81%); more writing (81%); higher-level critical thinking development (75%); and so on. One great advantage of these types of courses, as with "in-course" experiences, is that the course credit is easily transferable, whereas special courses may prove problematic, a point made by Nassau Community College in New York, whose program is composed entirely of these special sections with ten to twelve students in each (Roueche).

Specially-designed honors courses occupy a major place in several programs. These may range from small, one-credit seminars to sequences of courses designed to fulfill the general education core requirements. Many are interdisciplinary, often thematically based. For example, Nevada's Clark County Community College ties its honors curriculum directly to its Greenspun Center for Technology, with courses concentrating on word-processing, computer languages and business software, science fiction, history of technology, technological values and technical writing. Motlow (Tennessee) State's two-course honors sequence centers on "the culture of Appalachia as a microcosm of America", especially in racial terms (Motlow State). In 1996 Fresno City College participated in the A.A.C.C.'s "Exploring America's Communities" project, during which time "[t]he college's Honors colloquia included several conversations on the

meaning of diversity, ethnic identity and commonalities of American culture (to the extent if one exists)" (Fresno City College).

While these courses may well stimulate and satisfy the mind, will they satisfy admissions officers at four-year schools? Though virtually never discussed, this is a very important issue that community colleges that are creating honors curricula must confront. Co-ordination, and even close cooperation, with local colleges or universities can and does work, as in the California system (Roueche, Donovan); but students who desire to move beyond the Community college's normal transfer options may have difficulties transferring interdisciplinary courses or sequences.

While some schools such as Nassau and Corning rely on one type of course, most blend course types into a set of options, some number of which a student needs to take to attain an honors credential. Some of these may be mandatory -- often critical thinking and writing seminars. In their 1984 study, McKeague et al. displayed the frequency of course types in their 19 programs: 84% had special H-sections of standard courses; 68% had special courses; 63% had interdisciplinary courses; 53% had in-course honors options, and 53% had special research opportunities. In 1985 Cohen suggested the following typology of honors curricula: course-centered programs with honors sections of regular courses, which he sees as inexpensive and useful, but a sign of a weak institutional commitment; prescribed curricula, which may last a full year, be holistic and present a variety of options; core-

oriented programs that revolve around a common theme in an interdisciplinary manner, and that may in the process enhance some transferable skills and cognitive/ attitudinal development, though possibly at the expense of content: individualized or contract courses, which are easy, inexpensive, adaptable and flexible: comprehensive programs that utilize two or more approaches.

Although not discussed in the literature surveyed, certain factors no doubt influence the shape of a school's honors program. Though goals seem to have little influence beyond rationalizing such a program, the following probably do determine the options chosen: attitudes of the administration: size of the school: demographics of the clientele: region (including rural/urban): relationship of the school with local four-year institutions: resources (both staff and financial): faculty support/opposition: community support: and institutional history with honors (success begets persistence, failure reticence).

The true honors program, then, is a composite of curricular options and extracurricular opportunities designed to support the development of a motivated and challenged core of bright students. It also has a positive effect on the faculty involved, as suggested by adopted goals, prescriptive literature (e.g. Friedlander, Cohen), and program evaluations. In his study of mid-career faculty growth, Cohen suggests four benefits to participating faculty: minimal commitment: decreased size of classes leads to relatively large benefits for both faculty and

students; increased intimate contact with high ability and motivated students; and an augmented level of overall satisfaction. If the program is successful, it seems that evryone gains.

Do the Curricula and Programs Succeed?

In their "Program Evaluation Through Follow-Up: A Faculty-Owned and Operated Model", Nolan and Gill suggest the following steps: 1) develop a list of exit competencies; 2) create questionnaires for current students and alumni, for non-persisters, and for the employers or university professors of those who went through the program; 3) distribute the questionnaires; 4) tabulate results; 5) evaluate the data in light of survey validity; 6) distribute the results to stakeholders, highlighting effectiveness, need for change and guidelines for future developments. Most program reports are dated a few scant years after inception, so little may be found in the way of longitudinal data, and few of the published reports I have seen follow this model. In fact, most go beyond the subjects suggested and include faculty and administrators, and methods beyond questionnaires. Skau notes that evaluation is vital and that students, faculty, administrators and the program director and committee all "have a concern for the integrity and quality of the program and all should be part of the evaluative process. Period." Methods of assessment found in reports include classroom visits, telephone interviews, focus group interviews,

tabulation of student data, conferences among participating faculty, and self-evaluations, in addition to questionnaires.

Most evaluations begin with profiles of the students involved, including both demographic information and records of participation (persistence, grades) (Piland and Abzell: San Diego C.C.D.; Bulakowski and Townsend: Lucas et al; Day: Dykus and Newlon). Like college or university-level honors programs, community college programs tend to serve largely white female audiences with the requisite academic credentials. According to questionnaires, cost is the largest determinant of attendance at the community college. The average (mean, modal or median) age of participating students varies widely among institutions: eight Florida and Illinois schools showed 59% at 17-18 years of age (Piland and Abzell); the College of Lake County in Illinois showed 97% between ages 17 and 25 in 1995 (Bulakowski and Townsend); female Arizona Honors graduates had average ages of 36, however (Dykus and Newlon), and the San Diego District reported that more than 50% of participants were over 29, with a modal age over 34. San Diego further reported that over 25% already had a college degree, and 65% had previous college experience. Racially speaking, whites tend to be overserved, while minorities are under-represented, though patterns are broadly in line with overall school demographics. Further, honors students tend to stay in school longer, maintain higher G.P.A.s (though honors faculty admit to skewing grades to the high end).

According to Lucas et al., after graduation honors students earn slightly over 10% more income than the norm for the school's graduates. They also cite a higher rate of transfer to four-year schools beyond the level of state college. Nonetheless, they admit that there is "no clear evidence, other than the colleges they transfered to, that Honors students gained any more from their education at Harper College than did the general population" (3). Since the average number of honors courses completed by participants was 1.5, the weak conclusions may reflect the slight exposure as much as any ineffectiveness on the part of the individual courses.

"There is a paucity of empirical data documenting the positive effects of community college honors programs on recruitment, retention and public image," wrote Bulakowski and Townsend in 1995 (486). In the aggregate, however, these are more matters for the institution than the individual student or teacher. Crooks and Haag (1994) claim that "the value of a program must be determined by examining the perceptions of the program's major participants," which they proceeded to do for the Maricopa system. Not surprisingly, the results were positive all around. Nonetheless, other studies suggest problems of dropout from the program or the school: for example, San Diego lost 1/3 of its students the spring of 1987, its second year; in 1988 Bucks County Community College had to discontinue honors courses because of lack of participation (Rankin). Other studies suggest that while many may join programs, few complete them: this is

especially true of highly structured ones.

Despite the evidence that suggests that satisfaction levels are high and more tangible results are lacking, programs continue to be generated and innovate and thrive and fail. Roueche's thirteen programs are all success stories, and their participation growth rates suggest that students are eager to join up. North Arkansas grew from 25 to 123: Merced (California) from 10 to over 100: L.A.'s Pierce College turns away 75% of applicants to their program: and the Eastern Utah Honors Residence claims a retention rate of 97%. The rationale is growing hoary with age, the demand for "quality" in these schools is continuing and growing, and the transfer function of community colleges is increasing in importance. Combined with general patterns of student, faculty and administrator satisfaction, and relatively low costs of provision, honors programs appear to have found a genial home in the modern comprehensive community college, while philosophical complaints about elitism go the way of Flower Power and Free Love.

The very popularity of the concept, however, should call forth further careful and balanced studies of what has worked and, perhaps more importantly, what has not: and why. As the role and importance of the community college in America continue to evolve, so also will the place and role of honors within it. Reports of assessment and evaluation that promote efficiency and effectiveness are useful for all concerned.

APPENDIX

COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND DISTRICTS REPORTED ON IN WORKS CITED:

Brookhaven College (Tex.) (Todd)
Bucks County Community College (Penn.) (Rankin)
Butler County Community College (Kan.) (Roueche)
Carl Albert State College (Okla.) (Roueche)
Clark County Community College (Nev.) (Behrendt)
College of Eastern Utah (Roueche)
College of Lake County (Ill.) (Bulakowski and Townsend)
Community College of Rhode Island (Abood)
Corning Community College (N.Y.) (Roueche)
Darton College (Ga.) (Roueche)
Fresno City College (Cal.)
GateWay Community College (Ariz.)
Gulf Coast Community College (Fla.) (Etheridge, Roueche)
Hostos Community College (N.Y.) (Ruiz et al.)
John C. Calhoun State Community College (Ala.)
Loop College (Ill.) (CSCC)
Los Angeles Pierce College (Roueche)
Maricopa Community Colleges (Ariz.) (Day; Crooks and Haag, Skau, CSCC)
Merced Community College (Cal.) (Roueche)
Miami-Dade Community College (Fla.) (Thomas, CSCC)
Moraine Valley Community College (Ill.) (Lehner; McKeague)
Morris College (S.C.) (Gearheart)
Motlow State Community College (Tenn.)
Nassau Community College (N.Y.) (Roueche)
North Arkansas Community College (Terrill)
Palo Alto Community College (Tex.) (Roueche)
Raritan Valley Community College (N.J.) (Capps)
Richland College (Tex.) (CSCC)
Rockland Community College (N.Y.) (Bay)
San Diego Community College District (SDCCD; Armstrong and DiMeo)
San Bernardino Valley College (Cal.) (Roueche)
St. Louis Community College at Forest Park (CSCC)
St. Petersburg Community College (Fla.) (Sampson)
Tarant Community and Junior College (Tex.) (Roueche)
Waldorf College (Iowa) (Roueche)
West Los Angeles College (CSCC)
William Rainey Harper College (Ill.) (Lucas)
Wright College (Ill.) (CSCC)

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